



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of William Clarritt,
Fire Officer 1 (PM1099V),
Jersey City

Examination Appeal

CSC Docket No. 2019-2551

ISSUED: June 13, 2019 (RE)

William Clarritt appeals his score for the oral portion of the promotional examination for Fire Officer 1 (PM1099V), Jersey City. It is noted that the appellant passed the subject examination with a final score of 83.230 and his name appears as the 50th ranked eligible on the subject list.

It is noted for the record that this two-part examination consisted of a written multiple-choice portion and an oral portion. Candidates were required to pass the written portion of the examination, and then were ranked on their performance on both portions of the examination. The test was worth 80 percent of the final score and seniority was worth the remaining 20 percent. Of the test weights, 31.35% of the score was the written multiple-choice portion, 22.49% was the technical score for the evolving exercise, 7.53% was the supervision score for the evolving exercise, 4.28% was the oral communication score for the evolving exercise, 19.23% was the technical score for the arriving exercise, 7.53% was the supervision score for the arriving exercise, and 7.59% was the oral communication score for the arriving exercise.

The oral portion of the Fire Officer 1 examination consisted of two scenarios: a fire scene simulation with questions designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of fire fighters and the ability to assess fire conditions and hazards in an evolving incident on the fireground (evolving); and a fire scene simulation designed to measure the knowledge of safe rescue tactics and procedures to safeguard citizens, supervision of firefighters and the ability to plan strategies and tactics based upon a building's

structure and condition (arriving). Knowledge of supervision was measured by questions in both scenarios, and was scored for each. For the evolving scenario, candidates were provided with a 15-minute preparation period, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond. For the arriving scenario, a five-minute preparation period was given, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond.

The candidates' responses were scored on technical knowledge and oral communication ability. Prior to the administration of the exam, a panel of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) determined the scoring criteria, using generally approved fire command practices, firefighting practices, and reference materials. Scoring decisions were based on SME-approved possible courses of action (PCAs) including those actions that must be taken to resolve the situation as presented. For a performance to be acceptable, a candidate needed to present the mandatory courses of action for that scenario. Only those oral responses that depicted relevant behaviors that were observable and could be quantified were assessed in the scoring process.

Candidates were rated on a five-point scale, with 5 as the optimal response, 4 as a more than acceptable passing response, 3 as a minimally acceptable passing response, 2 as a less than acceptable response, and 1 as a much less than acceptable response. For each of the scenes, and for oral communication, the requirements for each score were defined.

For the evolving scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component, a 4 for the supervision component, and a 4 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 2 for the technical component, a 2 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his scores for the technical and supervision components of the arriving scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The arriving scenario involved a train/pedestrian collision. The pedestrian is sprawled on the road and not moving. She is reported to be deceased by a member of the railroad's company maintenance crew. Some train passengers were thrown forward in the incident and report injuries. Question 1 asked candidates to perform an initial report upon arrival using proper radio protocol. Question 2 asked for specific actions to be taken after the initial report.

For the technical component, the assessor indicated that the appellant failed to establish/name command, which was a mandatory response to question 1, and he failed to order a primary search of the train, which was a mandatory response to question 2. Lastly, he indicated that the appellant missed the opportunity to

appoint a Safety Officer, which was another response for question 2. On appeal, the appellant states that he appointed a Safety Officer.

In reply, a review of the file indicates that, for the technical component, the appellant indicated that he assigned a Safety Officer. Additionally, the appellant stated that he would establish command, the mandatory response to question 1. Thus, he missed only one mandatory response and he stated many additional responses. Accordingly, his score for the technical component should be raised from 2 to 3, using the flex rule. The flex rule was designed to assign a score of 3 to candidates who fail to give a mandatory response but who provide many additional responses. However, a score higher than a 3 cannot be provided in those cases. The appellant's presentation did not provide sufficient responses to warrant a score of 4.

The supervision question for the arriving scenario involved a member of the appellant's crew who has gone missing and is found giving an interview to a local TV crew. The assessor noted that the candidate missed the opportunities to instruct the firefighter to return to his post, to monitor future progress of the Firefighter, and to document any actions taken. On appeal, the appellant states that he removed the firefighter from the scene, continued to train with him to see his progress, and said he would keep a file on him.

In reply, the IC has assigned the candidate and his crew to fire watch as the rail company conducts a safety check on the train. A review of the presentation indicates that he removed the firefighter from the media, but did not return the firefighter to his post. Essentially, the firefighter did not have to perform his duties once he left his post. Then, the appellant set up a meeting and checked the file to see if there were prior incidents, and any discipline and the outcome of those incidents.

At the end of every scenario and prior to the questions, instructions state, "In responding to the questions, make sure your actions directly relate to the scenario. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to your score." The appellant said he would "keep file on the firefighter," but this is not the same as documenting any action taken in the meeting. The appellant stated that he would come up with training, but he did not state what the training was about. He stated he would train the firefighter and watch his body language to see if he's progressing along. This does not make sense in the context of this scenario. The firefighter has abandoned his post and is speaking to the media. However, evaluating progress by watching body language is more appropriate to training of a physical nature, such as doing a ladder carry. Watching body language would not provide information regarding progress towards staying on duty. The appellant stated that he set up a meeting with the fire firefighter, checked the file to see if there were prior incidents, any discipline and the outcome of those incidents. Thus,

he should receive credit for interviewing the firefighter and reviewing his prior record. Accordingly, the appellant's score for this component should be raised from 2 to 3. However, the appellant did not provide enough specific actions to warrant a score of 4.

CONCLUSION

A thorough review of the appellant's submissions and the test materials indicates that the appellant's score for the technical component of the arriving scenario should be changed from 2 to 3, and his score for the supervision component of the arriving scenario should be changed from 2 to 3, but the presentation does not warrant higher scores.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that the appellant's score for the technical component of the arriving scenario be raised from 2 to 3, and his score for the supervision component of the arriving scenario should be changed from 2 to 3.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 12th DAY OF JUNE, 2019



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